



THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

# COMMISSION COMMENTS

## Grading on a Curve: How We Set the Passing Score

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*"You did not score high enough to pass the recently administered Civil Service exam."*

**No one wants to read these words!**

The reality is that employment tests have passpoints, also known as cutpoints. Passpoints are scores that must be earned by test takers in order to pass an exam. The term "hurdle" is used when a passpoint exists in an examination process consisting of multiple phases. In the case of a hurdle, a test taker must achieve a minimum score in order to continue on to the next phase of the testing process.

Determining the passpoint is a serious issue. If a test taker fails an exam, they may be wondering if the passing score was set too high. On the other hand, hiring departments need to know that those individuals passing the exam have the skills needed to be successful on the job. The Columbus Civil Service Commission primarily uses one of two methods to determine passpoints.

One method is based on current employee performance. For this method, current employees, also known as incumbents, complete tasks or problems that are the same or similar to those that will be included on the exam. For example, driving through an Equipment Operator obstacle course, or

completing the Firefighter physical capabilities test. The results of the incumbent performance, along with supervisor input, are used to determine the minimum level needed day one on the job, and thus help determine the passing score.

Another method for setting a passpoint is based on the performance of the group of job seekers taking the exam. In this method, test takers with scores that fall below the average score are at risk of failing the exam. The passpoint for this method is set at a mathematically calculated score that is equivalent to a predetermined distance below the group's average score. This method is known as "grading on a curve" or "z-scoring." In this method, typically the bottom 30% of the test takers will not pass the exam, and the top 12% will be in the 90 band. This method may be used when testing a large group of test takers in which those with lower scores will not be hired prior to expiration of the eligible list.

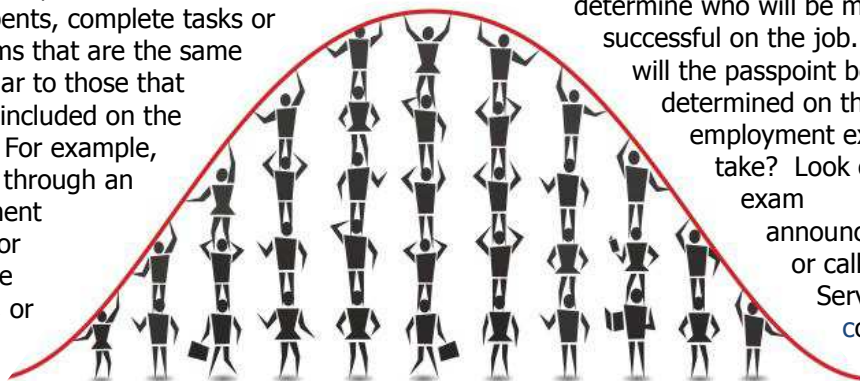
No matter what method is used, passpoints are set as a measure to help determine who will be more successful on the job. How will the passpoint be determined on the next employment exam you take? Look on the exam announcement or call the Civil Service contact to find out.

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**The greatest gift life has to offer is the opportunity to work hard at work worth doing.**

*- Theodore Roosevelt*





## Join the Team: Become a Columbus Firefighter

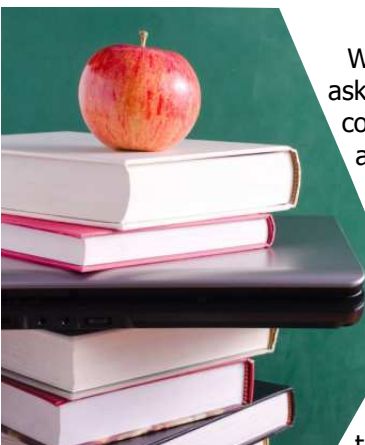
**Your journey begins here!** You can be a member of the firefighter family. You can be an integral part of the lifesaving teamwork in action. You can also have the hands-on experience of serving your community as an emergency medical technician. Take the first step towards the lifestyle and the family that is firefighting. The rewards for this profession are immeasurable!!!

For the entire month of March – from **March 1 through March 31, 2017**, applications for Columbus Firefighter will be accepted. If you are at least 17½ years of age, have a valid and current driver's license, and are a current United States citizen, you meet the minimum qualifications for the examination! Note: you must possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. at time of hire. Applications are being accepted by the Civil Service Commission on-line only at [www.columbus.gov/civilservice](http://www.columbus.gov/civilservice), or you can visit our office at 750 Piedmont Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224, Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for assistance if you do not have internet access. The examination has multiple phases, consisting of a multiple choice exam, an oral exam and a physical capabilities test.

The website contains a great deal of information regarding the testing process, including a study guide and videos to help you prepare for the examination <https://www.columbus.gov/civilservice/uniformed-fire-series/Firefighter/>. Prior experience is NOT required, so if you are ready for a rewarding career that will provide life-long skills and continue to be a challenge, don't miss out on this opportunity! For more information on this examination, call our Fire Employment Line at (614) 645-0879. To speak to a member of the Division of Fire Recruitment Outreach office, please call 614-645-6387 or visit [BecomeaCFDfirefighter.eventbrite.com](http://BecomeaCFDfirefighter.eventbrite.com) to register to attend recruitment events.



## Filling Out the Education Section of an Application



### *Be Sure to List Actual Number of Semesters or Quarters*

When you apply online and complete the education section of your application, you will be asked for the number of semester or quarter hours you completed for any college coursework. Be sure to check your transcripts and list the actual number of hours you attained. Some applicants misunderstand and only include the total number of semesters they attended which can cause the rejection of your application.

If you obtained a four-year degree, you likely have a total of twelve (12) or more credit hours each semester, which adds up to a minimum of 96 semester hours. By listing only eight (8) hours total (what you would enter if you were merely counting number of semesters), you would be rejected for an exam requiring a bachelor's degree. You will be asked to select the "Unit Type," which is semester or quarter hours and then the "Total Number of Units."

We want you to get full credit for your college coursework so go back and check your transcripts if you are unsure of your total hours.



## Classification Spotlight: Parks Maintenance Worker



### *Have you thanked a parks worker yet today?*

The hotdogs have been eaten; the soccer season is done; all of the runners have crossed the finish line; and most of the leaves have fallen from the trees. Winter is coming, and folks are trading their outdoor activities for the warmth of their homes. However, the work continues all year long in our city parks, reservoirs, and properties. The same employees who removed the trash left behind from your picnic, mowed the soccer fields, trimmed the trees along the running path, and raked the leaves off the playground are still hard at work. Irrigations systems need to be flushed. Plants, shrubs, trees, and flower beds must be prepared for winter. Soon, miles of sidewalks will need to be shoveled and de-iced.

There are multiple classifications that participate in these types of activities; however, the primary class responsible for this work is the Parks Maintenance Worker. Parks Maintenance Workers can be found in both the Water Division of Public Utilities and the Recreation and Parks Department. Typical Parks Maintenance Worker duties include mowing, trimming, planting, trash/litter removal, snow removal, invasive species removal, and equipment upkeep. At Watershed, six full-time workers mow and trim over 700 acres of grass at the four reservoirs. They are also responsible for dam, pump station, & pipe line inspections; concrete; carpentry; and operating dump trucks. At Recreation and Parks, there are 24 full-time Parks Maintenance Workers, responsible for 230+ parks covering over 10,000 acres of land. These workers also perform irrigation work, landscaping, playground maintenance, participate in special projects such as turf installation/care and dock installations/removals at the marinas, and other general maintenance that is required for the care and upkeep of our city parks.

To meet the minimum qualifications for this job, a candidate needs two years of experience operating a tractor mower and a valid driver's license. Candidates meeting these qualifications would take a civil service exam. The current exam is comprised of a performance test weighted 50% covering equipment safety inspection and tractor mower operation, and a paper/pencil experience evaluation weighted 50%. Possession of a valid Public Operator's License of various categories issued by the Ohio Department of Agriculture and/or a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) may be required for some specific positions.

The City of Columbus has many jobs covering a variety of skills and knowledge. If you are interested in the Parks Maintenance Worker job class or any other positions, visit our website at [Columbus.gov/civilservice](http://Columbus.gov/civilservice). Even if you *aren't* interested in performing this job, we encourage you to thank the next worker you see while you are enjoying one of City's many beautiful parks and properties.

*Parks Maintenance Workers mowing at our Upground Reservoir. Can you spot all 4 mowers?*



**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

**Main Office and Test Center**  
77 North Front Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1895  
614-645-8300  
CivilService@columbus.gov  
Fax: 614-645-8379

**Piedmont Test Center**  
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Columbus, Ohio 43224-3266  
614-645-0848  
PoliceFireTesting@columbus.gov  
Fax: 614-645-0866

[columbus.gov/civilservice](http://columbus.gov/civilservice)  
[cscfeedback@columbus.gov](mailto:cscfeedback@columbus.gov)

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## WHERE IS IT?

See if you recognize the location in our  
title banner and email your guess to  
[CEEhuff@columbus.gov](mailto:CEEhuff@columbus.gov)

We will print the answer and the names  
of the first five correct entries  
in our next issue!

### LAST QUARTER'S ANSWER North Bank Park

#### Last Quarter's First Five!

Tammy Brown, *Public Utilities*  
Heidi Ferguson, *Licensing*  
Roger Blair, *Income Tax*  
Mike Havens, *Income Tax*  
Christopher Bowling, *Police*

## ???Ask Eyestein???



**Dear Eyestein:**

**I have taken many Civil Service exams, have always brought my City I.D. badge as proof of who I am, and have been let in to the exam without any trouble. When I came to take a test this past October, they told me my I.D. wasn't good enough, and that I needed to bring my driver's license. They let me in to take the test right then, but I had to fax over a copy of the license later that day. Is this a change in policy, or is it because you have had a change in staff, and they don't know that a City I.D. badge is acceptable?**

**Signed, My I.D. was N.O.**

Dear I.D.:

Thanks for asking—we get variations of this question a lot, mostly from current City employees. First, I'll answer your direct questions: no new policies have been enacted regarding this, and our newest employees have been properly trained on what forms of I.D. are acceptable.

The exam you took in October has the following phrase as part of the minimum qualifications for the job: "Possession of a valid motor vehicle operator's license." This means that the departments that use the classification, the union, and Civil Service all agree that someone who is performing this job should expect to have to drive a vehicle to accomplish their duties. It does not mean they will have to drive every day or every week, but some aspect of the work will require a valid license.

When you are invited to come take the exam, we have already looked at your application to see if you meet the rest of the minimum qualification requirements. We ask to see the driver's license at check-in to verify that you possess a valid license. Some other jobs require licenses for different things, such as a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or a Public Operator's License issued by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Similarly, we would ask for those licenses at check-in. Conversely, if no specific license is listed in the minimum qualifications for the classification, we will accept a City I.D. badge when you arrive at the exam.

The best way to tell what to bring with you is to read your admission letter. We try to be very clear about what we need you to bring. If in doubt, please feel free to call us before you come.

## Update Your Email Address Online

**Have you changed your email recently?** You can easily update your email address on the Civil Service Commission website. Go to [Columbus.gov/civilservice](http://Columbus.gov/civilservice) and log on with your email address. This will take you to our online system, [GovernmentJobs.com](http://GovernmentJobs.com). Click on your name in the upper right corner of the screen and select Profile from the drop-down menu. Your current email address will be displayed in the contact information section. To make changes, select Edit and type in your new address. Once you save your information, you will immediately see that the change has been made. By keeping your email address updated, you won't miss out on exam and certification notices from the Commission. Many of the Department HR representatives will also contact you by email so make sure your preferred email address is the one you are using on our website.

